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# ON TAP

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## *Water Conservation*

Over the years, we have heard about the need to conserve water so frequently that it may have lost its message. So let us discuss three seemingly unrelated subjects and attempt to relate them to water conservation:

**First**, a joke (made politically correct). Have you heard the one about the bank representative who calls a customer to inform the customer that the customer's checking account is overdrawn? The customer replies, "How can that be when I still have checks?"

What does this have to do with water conservation? Recently, at TCWD's Open House, a water district employee was asked by a young attendee, "How can there be a shortage of water? When I turn on the faucet, water always comes out?"

There is no simple answer to that one. The water industry planners, the people who try and predict water availability based on weather, reservoir levels throughout the southwestern United States, projected population growth, and condition of the overall water industry infrastructure, tell us we are all facing a very real water shortage and remind us of the extremely important need to conserve water.

**Second**, take a trip on the 241 Toll Road. If you look at the areas that are not developed, that don't have houses or office complexes, you will see what biologists refer to as the native flora and fauna. These are fancy

words for California native plants (in fact, some of these plants grow well in Arizona, Nevada, and Utah, apparently failing to recognize state political boundaries).

The point to be made here is these plants are desert environment plants. They grow well with limited seasonal rain. They certainly don't have a lush tropical look. One hundred years ago in this area, the land was probably covered with these plants because that is what grows here naturally.

Through the miracle of modern engineering after World War II, most of southern California boomed with development and the water infrastructure that supports it. New homeowners in the 1950s certainly didn't want the native "weeds" to decorate their front and backyard. They wanted nice lawns like they saw around the homes they saw on television ("Ozzie and Harriet" and "Leave it to Beaver"). The lawn and garden industry "blossomed" and the common expectation was a nice green lush lawn in the front and backyard.

The request for water conservation slams into a "brick wall" when the expectation of the homeowner is a lush tropical rain forest in the front and backyard. It takes a lot of water to turn a desert into a tropical paradise.

There are strategies, however, that can help. Don't over water, use proper irrigation tools, and plant appropriately if the opportunity

presents itself. TCWD customers use five times more water in the summer than the winter. This is water that is used for irrigation.

**Third**, how about having a summer barbeque at your house? You invite twelve friends over for drinks and hamburgers. You have just enough buns and meat for twelve hamburgers. But the word is out, and twenty people show up (all friends, of course). What do you do? You send someone to the store for more meat and buns; the problem is solved.

Where is the water conservation message in this story? You have the luxury of buying more meat and buns if you run short. Not so with water; planning for and delivering water to the southern California area, south Orange County in particular, is a complex business. Water delivery is dependent on the following complex issues:

- the Colorado River (and the court determined water appropriation for California )
- the Bay Delta (and the Bay Delta Levies)
- Federal Court decisions that are intended to protect the environment
- the weather (rainfall and snow pack)
- the complete piping, pumping, and reservoir infrastructure system that brings water to your tap

The challenge of supplying water to all southern California customers starts with plenty of advance planning. It also is dependent on wise water use. Water conservation is something everyone should be on everyone's mind and practiced everyday.

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The Regular Board Meeting is held on the third Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the District office located at 32003 Dove Canyon Drive, Trabuco Canyon. The public is encouraged to attend.

## **TCWD'S ON TAP BOARD HIGHLIGHTS**

- ◇ **June 16, 2008 – Special Budget Workshop to review the FY 2008/09 General Fund Budget.**
- ◇ **June 18, 2008 - Received information relating to financial assumptions and water/sewer and reclaimed and recycled water rates.**
- ◇ **Received status updates relating to the Rose Canyon and Lang Wells Upgrades to Treatment Facilities Project and the Baker Regional Water Treatment Facility.**
- ◇ **Adopted the FY 2008/09 General Fund Budget and Capital Improvement Programs.**
- ◇ **Adopted Resolutions approving the FY 2008/09 special tax levies.**
- ◇ **Adopted the FY 2008/09 Appropriations Limit.**
- ◇ **Entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with Poseidon Resources LLC and participating retail agencies.**
- ◇ **Directed staff to move forward with the procedures to set the FY 2008/09 water standby assessments**
- ◇ **Conducted a Closed Session.**

*ON TAP* is published and distributed by TCWD. We welcome your comments, suggestions and questions. Please call or write Sharon E. Smith, Editor

TCWD's *ON-TAP*

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